

About CART

Established in 1996, CUTS CART is pursuing the cause of common consumers, initially being undertaken by CUTS as the mandate. The programmes of the Centre are primarily aimed at generating awareness, creating more responsible society and encouraging changes at the policy level by advocating with the government machinery and sensitising it to its issues of concern to the common man. The Centre has spearheaded several campaigns and pioneered consumer empowerment.

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SAC Pilots to Influencing Policy

CUTS Centre for Consumer Action, Research & Training (CUTS CART) with the support of the World Bank is implementing the project entitled, 'Crafting the Market for SAC Tools & Approaches in Supply-side Constituencies through Strategic Communication and Dissemination' to focus on the supply side constituencies to buy various social accountability (SAC) approaches and tools, which had proven successful through various SAC pilots in Rajasthan to improve the public expenditure outcomes. The objectives of the project are to:

- build and strengthen the market for social accountability approached in supply side constituency of Rajasthan;
- connect the interests of others in relation to policy issues with the results of pilots;
- trace and expose the impacts of the pilots; and
- galvanise media to magnify the strength of social accountability tools.

Divisional level advocacy meetings were organised in Jodhpur, on July 16, 2009 and in Kota, on August 19, 2009 respectively.

Advocacy Meet in Jodhpur

A Divisional Level Advocacy Meeting was held in Jodhpur, on July 16, 2009. The main objective of the meeting was to sensitise the district administration about various SAC approaches and tools. About 200 relevant stakeholders, including Divisional Commissioner J P Chandeliya and District Collector (Jodhpur)



Naveen Mahajan and several key officials participated in the event. J P Chandeliya said that the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) is very important development scheme for people at the grassroots. There is need for involve the community and public representatives for the effective implementation of the scheme as well as for ensuring accountability. Naveen Mahajan opined that it is a welcome step taken by CUTS to increase the accountability and community participation in various developmental schemes.

Advocacy Meet in Kota

A Divisional Level Advocacy Meeting was held in Kota, on August 19, 2009. About 70 relevant stakeholders including Kamla Meena, Zila Pramukh and D R. Meena, Chief Executive Officer, Zila Parishad and several key officials participated in the meeting. Kamla Meena said that due to lack of transparency and accountability in government schemes, many people do not get expected benefits. There is a need to make effective social audit in various schemes. D R



Meena said that there is need to involve public representatives in developmental schemes. George Cherian and Om Prakash Arya made presentations on the 'SAC Approaches' and 'Outcomes of SAC Pilots' respectively.

PROJECTS & PROGRAMMES

Media Workshop in Jaipur

A Media Workshop on 'Governance and Accountability' was held in Jaipur on August 28, 2009 in which Guenter Heidenhof (Governance Adviser) and J V R Murty (Water Institutions Development Specialists, WSP-SA) from the World Bank participated as key resource persons. The main objective of the workshop was to sensitise the representatives from the media (both print & electronic) in general about 'governance & accountability' and in specific about various social accountability (SAc) approaches and tools, its potential in improving the efficiency in service delivery and bringing in transparency and accountability in the processes, and in turn enhancing the public expenditure outcomes.

The expected outcome was more informed reporting by the media on governance and accountability issues and better collaboration with civil society organisations to advocate with policy makers in efforts to enhance public



expenditure outcomes. George spoke about the role of media in 'governance and accountability' issues and Om shared the outcomes from SAc pilots implemented by CUTS in Rajasthan.

Guenter said that good governance is pro-poor and leads to higher growth and investment. He described the role of media in improving governance by citing the case of Philippines. J V R Murty said that corruption is the symptom and root cause is poor governance.

Orientation to Surveyors

Under the project 'Reforming the processes in the Rural Development Department through policy and civic engagement, based on RTI Act, 2005 in Rajasthan, India' (RePoRDD), two orientation workshops for surveyors were organised in Jaipur, on July 14, 2009; and in Tonk, on July 18, 2009 respectively. About 20 participants attended the workshop in Jaipur and 13 attended the workshop in Tonk.

Drive an Extra Mile to Conserve Ram Niwas Garden!

About 86 percent of local residents and tourists suggest imposing a ban on the movement of vehicles in order to protect and conserve Ram Niwas Garden. While 48 percent opined to put absolute restrictions, 27 percent supported movement of at least non-motorised vehicles in the area. These findings emerged out from a survey carried out by CUTS CART to obtain public opinion regarding generating a concern for Ram Niwas Garden that calls for a prompt consideration from the government.

The lush spacious garden located in the centre of modern Jaipur is one of the favourite tourist attractions. Majority (90 percent) of the people surveyed expressed that the exponential growth of vehicles is creating a negative impact on the flora and fauna. At the same time as an upbeat response, 90 percent driving an extra mile to maintain its beauty and reducing the traffic burden in the area. About 69 percent of the people opined that the area is poorly maintained and 86 percent said that there are inadequate public facilities, dustbins and absence of proper seating arrangements. 41 percent believed that the rate of noise and air pollution is quite high and it does not give a sense that one is in a garden. Highlighting the pitiable situation in the area a group of foreign tourists exclaimed that the area catches huge tourist attention and has all the scope of improvement.



Campaign for Fixing the Reflectors

CUTS jointly with Road Transport Office (RTO), Jaipur had undertaken a campaign for fixing reflectors on slow moving vehicles, such as tractor trolleys and animal carts. RTO arranged about 12000 reflectors for sticking the same at rear side of the identified vehicles in 12 tehsils of Jaipur. The campaign was implemented in 11 tehsils with the help of networkers in each of the blocks of Jaipur district. Reflector Campaign for Jaipur taluk was directly implemented by CUTS team at Harmada Check Post and Delhi bypass, Sikar Road on August 07, 2009.

Grassroots Interface Meetings

CUTS with the support of the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) is undertaking an initiative over two years (2008-2010) in Nepal, Bangladesh, and two states of India (West Bengal and Rajasthan) to build capacity of consumer groups/CSOs to enable them to deal with the issues involved, take-up action research, share experiences, and carryout advocacy with policymakers and regulatory agencies to effect pro-consumer changes in the electricity regulatory/policy processes. The project is being implemented in association with local partner organisations across project territories.

CUTS CART is the project partner for implementing various activities in Rajasthan under the project. As a part of this project, Grassroots Interface Meetings (GIMs) were held in Banswara, on July 16, 2009; in Udaipur, on July 17, 2009; in Chittorgarh, on July 18, 2009; in Sirohi, on July 23, 2009; in



Sawai Madhopur on July 29, 2009; and in Kota, on July 30, 2009 respectively.

The objective of GIMs was to reach out to the electricity consumers at the local level and enable them to appreciate the role that they need to play in regulatory reforms and transfer some of the key advocacy skills to them.



CART Mini Retreat

CART Mini Retreat was held at Golden Tulip, Jaipur, on August 23, 2009. All the 12 staff members of the Centre attended the retreat. In addition to reviewing the ongoing projects, detailed discussions were held regarding the funding strategy, positive developments and the critical limitations.

National Environment Awareness Campaign

CUTS with the support of Ministry of Environment & Forests (MoEF) under the National Environment Awareness Campaign (NEAC) organised pre-proposal workshops in six divisions of Rajasthan: in Ajmer, on August 03, 2009; in Chittorgarh, on August 04, 2009; in Kota, on August 06, 2009; in Pali, on August 07, 2009; in Churu, on August 10, 2009; and in Jaipur, on August 11, 2009 respectively.

A total of 300 NGOs participated in these workshops. Assistance was provided to the participating NGOs in the preparation of proposals for submission to the Ministry. In addition, presentations on the issue of climate change were made in each of the workshops.

A total of 550 applications were received during 2009. The NEAC regional committee meeting was held in New Delhi during September 14-17, 2009, in which 358 proposals out of 458 were approved with a total budget of Rs 22,01,000 funding from the Ministry.

Monitoring of Effective implementation of Tobacco Control Laws

As an impact of the strong advocacy, the Department of Health & Family Welfare (DoHFW), Government of Rajasthan has formed an inspection committee to monitor the implementation of tobacco control laws in Jaipur and included CUTS CART in the committee as a representative of CSOs. The Centre conducted monitoring visits of 16 government departments in Jaipur city, on July 03, 2009. Dr P C Santhiya, Joint Director, Dr B N Sharma, Medical Officer and C P Sharma, Programme Assistant from Tobacco Control Cell, DoHFW were involved in the monitoring visits.



Gram Gadar Awards- 2008

The 'Gram Gadar Awards for Rural Journalism – 2008' were distributed by Bharat Singh, Minister for Rural Development and *Panchayati Raj*, Government of Rajasthan on August 25, 2009 to the following persons:

1. People's Participation in Power Reforms – Hanuman Prasad Jain (*Dainik Bhaskar*)
2. Relevance of NREGS – Babulal Naga (*Vividha Features*)

Both were given a cash prize of Rs 3,000 and a certificate of appreciation.

